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Kids in Defense of the Culture

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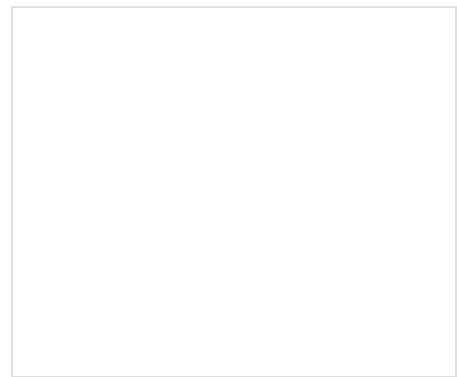


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The shock troops against Conservatism, Inc. have arrived. Witness the rise of the groypers.

These cowboys sent people ducking beneath barstools the moment they set a spurred boot in the Culture War saloon. It has been amusing, to say the least, but not everyone is laughing. Some have even warned that the pale rider of fascism trots alongside them, evidenced by the irreverent humor of YouTube host Nicholas Fuentes—the Steven Colbert of reactionary youth.

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If we are being honest, however, we seem to be confusing deliberately incendiary comedy schtick with political policy. The leftists' cancel culture—which comes for the heads of comedians who stray too far from the dogmas of political correctness—thrives among conservatives, too.

So, who are the groypers? “They are mostly young Christians who care about the country and feel like the conservative establishment is not supporting policies that put America first,” says Jaden McNeil. Mr. McNeil is the former president of the Kansas State University chapter of Turning Point, USA. McNeil recently resigned from TPUSA after he and his colleagues concluded that the organization does not represent their values.

“I think Conservatism, Inc is terrified,” McNeil told me, “and I don’t see this slowing down until they stop selling out for donors at the expense of the American people.” He sees the movement “shaking up conservative politics” across the country for the foreseeable future. Indeed, the reach of groypers extends far beyond the campus quad.

I asked one groypers—we’ll call him “John”—to outline for me some basic policy points from his perch in Washington, DC, where he works as a consultant.

To start, their foreign policy views can be altogether summarized in one word: “No.” This outlook has labeled them naïve at best and “anti-Semitic” at worst, all because they dare to oppose neoconservative foreign policy. This is the clique, as Leon Hadar wrote, “consisting mostly of intellectually light-weight Washington, operators and pamphleteers, like Max Boot, David Frum, Elliott Cohen, Bret Stephens, and the late Charles Krauthammer,” who “began promoting an idealist, almost messianic foreign policy program.” However, permanent alliances, billions in foreign aid, and eternal warfare do not compute for groypers.

This quasi-isolationist stance alone has been enough to have them banished from the halls of respectable conservatism. Groypers, says John, “are tired of boomers dominating and gatekeeping the conversation and movement.”

He says that they are deeply skeptical of “abstract principles and dogmas” that take the place of good sense. In the same way that they don’t believe in spreading democracy by the sword around the world, groypers do not have a sacred cow in free trade. They see “bastard capitalism” as a subversive, post-national force that merely produces consumers, not patriots. “Who,” as James Burnham asked, “would give his life for the GNP?” Not groypers.



As far as they can tell, John said, most mainstream conservatives remain “temperamentally and spiritually” aligned with economic Reaganism. It was hoped



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that millennials would guide the GOP to green pastures.

Things seemed promising at first, with the rise of young conservative stars like Ben Shapiro. But then millennials settled on the same intellectual cud as their boomer forebears, mindlessly chewing on and regurgitating the stale platitudes of free trade and free markets *à la* Ronald Reagan. Having seen their families struggle—and having witnessed the middle class vanish before their eyes in the maw of modernity—groyppers don't trust trickle-down economics to fill their cup. Worse, they grew up in an era when corporations from Nike to Dick's Sporting Goods have made it a point to virtue signal their “woke” bona fides. For groyppers, “woke capitalism” looks a lot like plain old capitalism.

Naturally, they believe that the government has a legitimate role in looking after people, *contra* the conservative ideologues who proclaim—as Turning Point USA founder Charlie Kirk has—that “it is not government's role to take care of its citizens.” Groyppers trust Kirk's maxims about as far as they can throw him. Indeed, mistrust is a central theme of this movement: mistrust of political orthodoxy, of self-evident truths, and of institutions. John tells me that their “mistrust in the system” is only reinforced by the “media getting everything wrong when it comes to them.” The Q&A sessions from Kirk's “Culture War” tour illustrate this problem.

When a groyper asked how traditional Christian values can be compatible with things like transgenderism, Kirk recast the question as a personal attack on his gay cohost. We are not a “theocracy,” said Kirk, an astute observer of the obvious. Next question.

Then came a sable-haired groyper with the complexion of an Arabica bean. How can America, he asked, retain its foundational Anglo-American culture in the era of mass immigration? Kirk brilliantly fired back by charging him with holding “racist” ideas. Next question.

It seems like whenever groyppers speak, no one actually hears what they are saying. Every question, and certainly every joke, becomes an opportunity for a strawman that distracts from meaningful discussion. Either establishment conservatives are pathological bad faith actors, or they have drunk from the cool waters of groupthink just as deeply as their liberal counterparts.

Whatever can be said of their flaws, groyppers ought to give us hope for a more authentic politics. These kids see through the paper tigers on the Fox News circuit and are thoroughly dissatisfied with the fair-weather conservatism that dominates the mainstream. Yes, there are trolls and cranks, but which movement doesn't have a few? Their humor is offensive precisely because they are reacting to stifling political correctness. When a person can be “cancelled” at any moment, gallows humor that borders on the excessive is an understandable—or, at any rate, unsurprising—reaction.

More importantly, they are passionate about ethical and moral questions, well-

read on the issues, and intellectually curious. They recognize that a spiritually void, metapolitically incorrect movement is worthless: it stands *on* nothing, so it can stand *for* nothing. They have chosen to be guided by a Christianity hammered free of the dross of the modern world. In an age of compromise and petty principles, groypers have chosen to stand for something, armed with little more than digital slingshots. That alone is reason enough to hear them out.

Tagged as [Charlie Kirk](#), [conservatism](#), [Groyper](#), [illiberalism](#), [Nicholas J. Fuentes](#)



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